

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL DURBAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 036427

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, ETRD, SF

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SALE OF SIKORSKY S-65 HELICOPTERS TO

SOUTH AFRICAN FIRM

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF SIKORSKY AIRCRAFT DIVISION OF UNITED AIRCRAFT HAVE CONTACTED DEPARTMENT CONCERNING POSSIBLE SALE OF FIVE S-65 HELICOPTERS TO COURT HELICOPTERS (FORMERLY COURT LINE HELICOPTERS) OF SOUTH AFRICA FOR USE IN MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE, SHIP TOWING, AND POLLUTION CONTROL. COURT REPORTEDLY HAS AUTHORITY TO ORGANIZE AND OPERATE SERVICE FOR SAG ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. POLLUTION CONTROL IN EVENT OF OIL SPILLS FOLLOWING GROUNDING OR COLLISION OF SHIP TANKERS;

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B. TOWING TO PREVENT IMMINENT GROUNDINGS OR COL-

LISIONS;

C. LONG RANGE SEARCH AND RESCUE OF COMPLETE SHIP'S CREWS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AT SEA AS FAR OUT AS 600 MILES. SIKORSKY REPS STATE COURT PLANS STATION ONE S-65 EACH IN DURBAN, PORT ELIZABETH, AND WALVIS BAY AND TWO IN CAPE TOWN. THESE HELICOPTERS WOULD ALSO BE USED TO PROVISION PASSING SHIPS, ACCORDING TO SIKORSKY.

2. MILITARY VERSIONS OF S-65 INCLUDE US NAVY RH-53D MINE-

SWEEPING AND MULTI-MISSION HELICOPTER AND USAF HH-53C HEAVY-LIFT HELICOPTER. IN VIEW OF SAG CONTINUING INTEREST IN MINESWEEPING HELICOPTERS, WE BELIEVE COURT INTEREST IN S-65 REQUIRES CLOSE, DETAILED SCRUTINY BEFORE TENTATIVE SALES REQUEST BY SIKORSKY CAN RECEIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION. THEREFORE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE POSTS' RESPONSES (OR A SINGLE COORDINATED RESPONSE) SOONEST, WITH ALL AVAILABLE DETAILS FROM COURT AND ANY OTHER SOURCES TO EACH OF FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. TO WHAT USE WILL S-65 HELICOPTERS BE PUT WHEN NOT ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES MENTIONED IN PARA 1?
B. WILL ACTIVE DUTY SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIST IN ANY WAY IN OPERATIONS OF S -65'S (I.E. CREW, MAINTENANCE, ETC)?
C. WHO WILL SERVICE, MAINTAIN AND REPAIR S-65'S? WHO CURRENTLY PERFORMS SUCH SERVICES ON COURT'S EXISTING HELICOPTER FLEET?
D. DOES COURT HAVE ANY INTENTION OF PURCHASING OTHER S-65 HELICOPTERS IN ADDITION TO FIVE ALREADY BEING DISCUSSED?
E. WHAT SERVICES, IF ANY, HAS COURT PERFORMED IN PAST FOR SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY OR POLICE?
F. DEPENDING ON RESPONSES TO ABOVE QUESTIONS, WOULD COURT BE WILLING TO FURNISH WRITTEN GUARANTEES THAT HELICOPTERS WOULD BE USED ONLY FOR PURELY COMMERCIAL PURPOSES AS MENTIONED IN PARA 1; WOULD NOT BE MAINTAINED, CREWED, OR SERVICED BY ANY BRANCH OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY; WOULD NOT BE BASED AT ANY MILITARY FACILITY AND WOULD NOT BE SOLD, LEASED OR OTHERWISE DISPOSED OF WITHOUT PRIOR CONFIDENTIAL

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USG APPROVAL?

3. FYI: S -65 COSTS \$6 MILLION AND IS LARGEST HELICOPTER MADE BY SIKORSKY END FYI. MAW

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